

LEWIS. (W)

AN
ADDRESS

DELIVERED

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC-GENEALOGICAL
SOCIETY,

HELD AT

BOSTON, MASS., WEDNESDAY, JAN. 7, 1863.

BY WINSLOW LEWIS, M. D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.



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ADDRESS.

Gentlemen, Members and Friends of our Society:

You will, I am sure, readily agree with me, that our first duty, at this, the first meeting in a New Year, is to express our grateful thanks to *Him*, in whose hand, rest all the things both of Time and of Eternity, for his mercy and goodness in permitting so many of us—even of those who have traveled a long way on Life's Journey—to enter in health and peace and happiness upon another annual stage of our earthly pilgrimage.

You are all well aware, that I hold in hearty veneration and esteem these anniversaries, these great and sacred landmarks along the vast plain of time; and that I would gladly—however old-fashioned it may seem to some—witness an increased warmth and enthusiasm, in the celebration of such annual festivals as *Christmas* and the *New Year*, the one, the New Year's Day of salvation to the sinning, suffering soul of man; the other, the New Year's Day of lengthened life to his body, and of renewed energy, fertility and joy to the whole world of animate and inanimate nature, by which he is surrounded. Let us then rejoice and be thankful that

“The King of Light, Father of aged Time,
Hath brought about that day, which is the prime
To the slow gliding months; when every eye
Wears symptoms of a sober jollity,
And every hand is ready to present
Some service in a compliment.”

—*Poole.*

and, as we each and all have already doubtless displayed, in gifts and kindness to our families and friends in private life, the warm and genial feelings, awakened by the birth of the New Year; so let us resolve to day, not to allow this society in which we all have so near and dear an interest, to be without some New Year's gift from each of us.

It was amiably and well expressed by Bourne: "If I send a New Year's gift to my friend, it shall be a token of my friendship: if to my benefactor, a token of my gratitude: if to the poor, which at this season must never be forgot, it shall be to make their hearts sing for joy: and give praise and adoration to the Giver of all good gifts." And another more recent writer observes: "On New Year's Day, the man of business opens new account-books; 'a good beginning makes a good ending.'" Let every man open an account with himself, and so begin the *New Year*, that he may expect to say at its termination, it has been a *good year*. In the hilarity of the season, let him not forget that, to the needy it is a season of discomfort.

" There is a satisfaction,
In doing a good action."

and he who devises liberal things, will find his liberality return to him in a full tide of happiness."

Now, in these remarks, so beautifully applicable to the general duties of the season, may also be found some special lessons for *us*. As we enter this place of meeting, our separate and individual feelings and interests become merged for the time, in the common concerns of our association. We must now think and feel as members of the Historic-Genealogical Society of New England. And no one here, I imagine, will be inclined to deny, that this society has the strongest claims upon our friendship and our gratitude. As the mental and the spiritual transcend, in beauty and in majesty, the material and mortal; so to every refined and cultivated mind, the dearest and most cherished friends must ever be those studies and pursuits, which tend, at once to enlighten and exalt the *intellect*, and to humanize and sanctify the *heart*. To this class belong preëminently, if purely and properly pursued, the studies, to whose cultivation our society is devoted; and of which I may fairly observe in the words of Cicero: "*Hæc quidem studia doctrinæ, quæ quidem prudentibus et bene institutis pariter cum ætate crescunt, ut honestum illud Solonis sit, quod ait versiculo quodam, senescere se multa in dies addiscentem: quæ voluptate animi nulla certe potest esse major,*" "and these indeed are the pursuits of learning, which with the discreet and well educated, keep pace with the progress of age, so that *that* is a fine observation of Solon's, when he declares in one of his verses, that 'every day which adds to his age, adds to his learning,' an intellectual pleasure, than which none can be more intense." Such studies, and especially those of biography and history, have been also well denominated by the same great author: "*Solatio et oblectamenta vitæ,*" a title, the

acknowledged correctness of which, is sufficient to establish their claim, and the claim of the society, whose object is their promotion upon our warm and lasting gratitude. This society moreover stands thus simultaneously towards each one of us, in the position of a friend and benefactor, conferring great and important benefits; and also of a child, still asserting its claim upon our tender affection and watchful care. Let us then, in regard to it "so begin the New Year, that, in the words of Hone, "we may expect to say at its termination, it has been a *good year*" and let us practically bear in mind the proverb "a good beginning makes a good ending."

Impressed and depressed as the minds of most of you probably are, by the present political aspect of our country, it may at first appear to be an inappropriate and unfavorable time for proposing any measure calculated to involve expense or risk; yet *this* is exactly what I am about to propose, as your New Year's gift and service to this society; and I hope to show you that, not only is the time appropriate for such a proposal, but that those very *circumstances* of the time, which you and I so deeply lament and deplore, are precisely *the* circumstances which call for such renewed and increased efforts on our part, as may indeed render this New Year, at its termination, a *good year* to the prosperity and usefulness of our society. Let me first, however, briefly review the progress we have made during the past year, and our present position. We shall then the more correctly understand the point of departure from which we are now about to start.

During the past year there have been added to the library 380 bound volumes, 1898 pamphlets, 36 original MSS., and 20 volumes of newspapers.

There are 30 honorary members, 14 life members, 355 resident members, and a large number of corresponding members. Of these 21 resident, 5 corresponding and 3 honorary members were admitted during the last year. 4 honorary, 7 resident and 3 corresponding members have deceased the past year. And 16 biographical and genealogical notices of great interest have been prepared and read by our very accurate and able officer, Mr. Trask.

Even from this brief summary, you will have learned some cheering and gratifying facts. It is very gratifying and very cheering to know that, while so many public societies and private individuals have fallen into debt and difficulty during the past year, our society stands free and unincumbered; and *that not one bill, properly audited, has ever had to be presented a second time for payment.*

For this healthy and creditable state of affairs, we are, I am bound to say, greatly indebted to the ability and care of our excellent treasurer, Mr. Towne. And from him I am authorized to announce to you that, providing a sufficient number of life memberships can be secured, by which the sum of \$1000 will accrue to the society, there will be donated to it a like amount from one of its members. That this munificent offer will be fully carried out, you can have no better assurance than that of our treasurer, who, I am much inclined to suppose, is very strongly identified with the generous donor. It is also a source of satisfaction to learn that so large an increase of members has taken place during the last year, and that the total number of resident members reaches so respectable a number as 355—a number much larger than that of many learned societies of much older standing—consisting of persons of education, refinement and character. Many of the names upon the list are those of men well known to fame. The number and the nature of the papers read during the last 12 months have both been such as to reflect much credit on the labor and zeal of the gentlemen who prepared them. The value of the biographical notices especially cannot be too highly estimated, nor too gratefully acknowledged. The preparation of such papers is one of the most patent and proper duties of our society, nor can I too earnestly recommend for the imitation of all our brethren, the admirable example set them both by our former and present historiographers. I may have to allude to this subject again, and therefore will only pause at present to remark that such biographies, carefully and conscientiously prepared, deposited in the archives of the institution, and at the close of each year bound in volumes, systematically arranged and furnished with indexes, will form a body of literature of incalculable value to the present and future generation, and, as a consequence, will reflect the greatest credit on this our society.

It is in no invidious spirit towards other societies of a partially similar character to our own that I refer, as *I do most emphatically*, to a feature in our constitution, which seems to me to be especially worthy of commendation, and to give the society a strong claim upon the encouragement and support of our fellow-citizens, I was about to say “of the educated classes” of our community; but, thanks to our liberal political institutions, and to the wise and noble men who framed them, we have *no uneducated* classes. I allude to the broad and liberal principle, which throws open the door of our society to every man of cultivated mind and upright character; in this respect

following the example of our sister institution of New York. We all know that, both in this country and in Europe, a narrow and exclusive, wrongly called "conservative" spirit, guides the action of many learned societies, and renders it a matter of great difficulty for any "*novi homines*" to gain admission within their jealously guarded precincts.

I have examined with some care the lists of the members of some of these exclusive societies, and I have failed to discover that, as a body, they are superior, in point of learning, virtue, or any other mental or moral endowment, to hundreds of those so jealously excluded from their ranks. Our society utterly ignores and rejects all such exclusiveness. Our object is, distinctly and avowedly, to promote, in the most thorough and practical way, the studies of History and Genealogy. We believe that in a well educated community like that of Massachusetts, there are very few indeed, who are not qualified to assist, more or less, in this useful and patriotic work; and still fewer, who, if they feel a present deficiency, do not desire to supply it, by seeking to gain the knowledge of which they stand in need; and therefore, putting aside all presumptuous claims and narrow distinctions, we invite all men of intelligence and good character, who appreciate the value and importance of these our special pursuits, to come and join us, and thus to assist in diffusing the beneficial results of our labors more widely and generally throughout our country.

These are all cheering and gratifying points in the review of our progress thus far; and now I repeat that renewed exertions and an enlarged machinery are needed by our society, and that the present critical and trying time is *precisely that* which, so far from being inauspicious and unfavorable to such a proposal, imperatively calls for it, in the strong united tones of duty and of patriotism. Turn back with me the glance of memory over even the last twelve months—the retrospect indeed is a sad one, and yet, with all the sadness, there mingles the feeling of a just and lofty pride. How many a noble son of America and Massachusetts after having endured sufferings and sacrifices, and performed deeds of valor, unsurpassed by the best *men* and bravest *heroes* of any land or age, has that brief period seen borne to his bloody grave. To a certain extent, indeed, it is all too true that

"We've fallen on gloomy days.
Star after star decays;
Many a bright name, that shed
Light o'er our land is fled!

Dark falls the tear of him that mourneth
 Lost joy or hope that ne'er returneth :
 But brightly flows the tear
 Wept on a soldier's bier !

* * * * *

But peace to each manly soul that sleepeth,
 Rest to each faithful eye that weepeth !
 Long may the fair and brave
 Sigh o'er each hero's grave ! ”

Yes! here lies our consolation, and the comfort and consolation of the many mourning hearts throughout our land. Few indeed are there amongst us, who have not been called to bewail the loss of some one near and dear amongst the hero-dead, that have been offered, voluntary victims, on the sacred altar of their country's liberty and safety; but amidst all our mourning, we derive some consolation from the thought, that

“ Brightly flows the tear
 Wept o'er a hero's bier.”

To each and all of these, our honored hero-dead, the words of the great Grecian orator, uttered above the funeral-pyre of his countrymen, slain in a like defence of a noble republic against a tyrannical and helot-holding oligarchy, are peculiarly applicable. I give you their purport in Dr. Arnold's summary and paraphrase: “ They have died for their country and *her* praise is *theirs*. My task is then mostly completed; yet it may be added, that their glorious and beautiful lives have been crowned by a most glorious death. Enjoying and enjoyed as had been their life, it never tempted them to seek by unworthy fear to prolong it. To repel their country's enemies was dearer to them than the fairest prospect which added years could offer them; and having gained this, they were content to die; and their last field witnessed their brightest glory, undimmed by a single thought of weakness. Let us follow, then, their example, contemplating our country's greatness, till our minds and hearts are fully inspired with a sense and a love of it! This is but the natural fruit of virtues such as theirs, whom we are now lamenting. They, when they could give her nothing else, gave her their own lives, and their return is *an enduring monument in every heart, in every land*, forever! Let us do likewise, remembering that to us to live conquered and degraded, after so much dominion and glory, would be far more bitter than the momentary pang of triumphant death! There is also one brief passage in this speech so gloriously eloquent, that I cannot refrain from giving you the literal translation of the Greek—It is this:

“For the whole world is the grave of illustrious heroes, nor is it merely the inscription upon monuments in their *native* land, that preserves their memory: but even in the land of *foreigners*, there is cherished in regard to them, an *unwritten memorial of the heart*, rather than of a material monument.”

Those noble words of Pericles, or rather of Thucydides, so strikingly appropriate to the glorious deeds and glorious deaths of our warrior-slain, ought to endear the study of Grecian history to every American heart. It is most gratifying to know that the spirited and patriotic diligence of some of our members, has secured for our archives, memoirs of several of those noble lives given by the old Bay State to the cause of our country. But of very many, we have, as yet, no record. This deficiency I would urge you earnestly to lose no time in supplying. Let it not be said that this New England Society, professedly devoted to the studies of Biography and History, has failed to secure and register an authentic memorial of even one of that host of New England heroes, who, since the commencement of this unhappy war, have attested by their life-blood, their love of country, of constitution and of liberty! This duty, then, I would in the first place, respectfully, but energetically, commend to the prompt and earnest attention of all my brethren of this society. As yet, the means and materials for its fulfillment are easily accessible; but every month, nay, every week, and every day, will make its effective performance more difficult and laborious. Let not the anniversary of this, our first meeting of the new year, return, without seeing our library supplied with a complete list of these records of the patriotic heroism by which this dark and trying time of our republic has been so gracefully adorned, and so brightly illustrated. Nor would I have records merely in the form of MSS., but as they so well deserve, in the more permanent and more useful form of volumes printed and published by our society. We should then have, even in that collection alone, a library of inestimable value, full of the most soul-inspiring life-lessons for the instruction and elevation of the hearts and minds of our childrens' children; lessons that will, with God's blessing, prove the strongest and most enduring bulwark through all time, of American prosperity, power and independence! And before I leave this subject, let me observe, as a matter of no slight significance and importance, more particularly to such a society as ours, that the majority of those, our departed heroes of whom I have been speaking, were as distinguished for their love of literature and of history, as for their valor on the battle-field. Almost all of them might, could he come

once more among us, fairly appropriate to himself and his career, the words of Cicero, in his well-known defence of Archias, "*Nisi multorum præceptis multisque literis mihi ab adolescentia suasissem, nihil esse in vilâ magnopere expetendum, nisi laudem et honestatem: in eû autem persequendâ omnes cruciatus corporis, omnia periculâ mortis atque exsilii, parvi esse ducenda; nunquam me, pro salute vestrâ, in tot ac tantas dimicationes, atque in hos profligatorum hominum quotidianos impetus obfecissem,*" which I may freely translate, as addressed by them to America in general, and to their native state in particular: "Had I not thoroughly convinced myself, from my youth upwards, by the example and instruction of many, and by much reading, that nothing in life was worthy of eager pursuit, except glory and honor: but that in seeking to attain these, all sufferings of the body, all dangers of death and exile, ought to be esteemed of little account, I would never have exposed myself in defence of your safety, to so many and so deadly struggles, and to those constant attacks of reckless rebels."

And again, my friends, I would not be content, nor have you to be content, even with these documentary memorials of our illustrious dead, all valuable and desirable as these may be. I would have the very form and features of each of this glorious band of patriot martyrs kept in familiar presence before the eyes of the members and friends of our society in the sculptured marble, and on the painted canvas. It was a wise and admirable custom of the ancient Greeks and Romans, to consecrate the cognate arts of sculpture and of painting, to the preservation of the memory of their departed great ones. Nor was it merely their temples, council halls, and other public buildings, that were thus adorned with the forms and the faces of illustrious statesmen, warriors, patriots, but even each private citizen of moderate means and rank, was greeted, as he entered the hall of his home, with the sight of busts and portraits, whose expressive features, illumined by the light of noble deeds, warned him to avoid all that was mean, and cowardly, and base, and to aim at and seek after "*pro virile parte,*" with all the power at his command, the virtuous, the patriotic and the noble!

Even these two suggestions which I have thus, under the strong impulse of duty, ventured to offer for your consideration — the one of an extended library of contemporaneous biography, the other of an auxiliary collection of busts and portraits, must either presuppose or involve as a necessary consequence, another very serious and important step — a step from which, at a time of pecuniary public embarrassment like the present, the society may, at first sight,

somewhat shrink, but which I believe to be of absolute and essential consequence to its continued and increased vigor and usefulness. I allude, of course, to the procuring of a building capable of accommodating such collections with convenience, as well as of affording for our meetings a hall better adapted by situation, size and architecture, to the enlarged numbers, and now acknowledged dignity of our society. I recently had the pleasure of inspecting the rooms and equipments of a kindred society, and that society not a very old one, in the city of New York — the New York Historical Society, and I confess that something of chagrin, though not, I trust, of ungenerous envy, mingled with the admiration, which that inspection excited within me. In addition to many other things of vast utility in promoting the special aims of the society, I saw there a large, valuable and admirably arranged library, in which the historical student can scarcely fail to find each and every book required for the effective prosecution of his studies and researches. But in addition to this, I was at once surprised and gratified to find embodied among the treasures of the society, and located in its library, a vast and various collection of Egyptian antiquities, comprising upwards of eleven hundred specimens, many of them very rare and valuable, of ancient Egyptian art.

This splendid collection has become the property of the society through the munificence of the citizens of New York, and as I gazed upon it, and reflected upon a fact so creditable to the generosity and public spirit of a community which, with perhaps a somewhat exaggerated sense of literary superiority, we of Boston are apt to identify chiefly with the successful pursuit of trade and commerce, I could not altogether suppress a hope that so noble an example might act as a wholesome stimulus upon the public spirit of our city, in impelling it to encourage and help in some similar way, or by the gift of a suitable site for our new offices, an institution which has now given ample proof, as well of its great usefulness to the community, as of the liberal character of its constitution and arrangements. But this was by no means all that attracted my attention in the rooms of the New York Historical Society, the visitor to which may gratify his curiosity and love of the antique, by an inspection of the Lenox Collection of Nineveh Sculptures, a collection which, when increased, as it shortly will be, by the American collections now awaiting the space and means of arrangement, will, I am informed, bear to be compared with the far-famed Nineveh Remains of the Sloane Museum of London. Besides these relics of ancient art, which are the pro-

perty of the society, its general attractiveness and means of usefulness have been largely increased, by its becoming the custodian and exhibitor of the New York Gallery of Fine Arts, a collection with which must ever be honorably associated the name of LUMAN REED, to whose cultivated taste, sound judgment and expansive generosity, that Gallery of Art owes its foundation. Other interesting collections of paintings are there deposited also for exhibition, and the generosity both of artists and of the friends of history and art, has been displayed in presenting many valuable portraits as gifts to the society. Here again I would say, not to our members alone, but to the friends of history and biography in learned and literary Boston, "Go ye and do likewise."

Many of you will agree with me, as well in my admiration of this New York institution, and of the munificence of the community in affording it such liberal and valuable support, as in regard to the desirability of securing for ourselves a more eligible and commodious building, adorned with suitable apparatus, in the form I have suggested of library, busts and paintings; and yet may consider it little better than an Utopian dream, to propose the attainment of such an object at the present time. Pardon me, if I dissent from this doubt. Through a life of some length, I have maintained a firm and unwavering faith in the promptitude and willingness of the citizens of Boston, to encourage and support any cause, that should exhibit substantial proof of its intrinsic worth and its public utility. Such proof has now been afforded by the unobtrusive, but steady and persevering labors of this society, during a period more than long enough to test the soundness and merit of any undertaking; and I cannot bring myself to believe that the public of Boston will show less liberality towards a society, whose labors appeal more directly, through the channels of biography and genealogy, to the sympathy and support of each individual member of the community, than that of commercial New York has exhibited towards one, whose wider and less personal field of history, unassociated with these kindred departments, causes its column of interest to rest solely and entirely on the broad basis of love of literature.

Do not imagine, I pray you, that I would seek this public support "*in forma pauperis*," or as begging any favor. I should be very sorry to make even a remote allusion to such a topic, did I not believe that we *deserved* it, as a *matter of justice* and of right. New England at large, and Massachusetts more particularly, and Boston *most* of all, already owe a deep debt to the labors of this society,

collective and individual, for a very large number of most interesting and valuable memoirs of citizens, prepared by our members not alone for the journals of our institution, but for the public press of Boston; and should the community come forward to-morrow and present us with the free gift of a commodious and handsome building, it would only be discharging a just debt of gratitude. But though I confidently look for this eventual recognition of our claims and services, I would not wait for, or depend upon it *alone just now*. It was a true and pithy saying of one, whose memory is dear to every son of Boston, that "God helps those who help themselves," and I believe that, even now, how dark soever the political and pecuniary atmosphere all around may be, sufficient public spirit and sense of individual duty will be found, even in our own body, to supply the means for building, or otherwise securing, both a more convenient and eligible building than this, and also for forming the nucleus, at least, of that collection of sculpture and painting, which I hold to be of such vital consequence to the successful prosecution of our labors, in the promotion of biographical and historical studies.¹ Nor do I, for a moment doubt, that even now, as soon as proof is afforded of this our willingness to "help ourselves" that, so far at all events as the site for a building is concerned, the city will be ready and willing to extend to us a helping hand. In this, as in many another cause, success depends upon a just and well-founded courage and confidence. I, for one, believe we deserve it. I feel sure that the circumstances of the time are precisely such as demand a vigorous and self-sacrificing effort on our part, and no less confident am I, that if we put forth that effort, pulling with a "long pull and a strong pull, and a pull all together" we shall succeed, and thus render the year that is now *new*, when it becomes old and draws towards its end, emphatically a *good* year for our society and for our own consciences. At all events, I would say, let us simply endeavor in this as in all else, to discover the path of duty, and, having so discovered, to pursue it manfully and fearlessly, taking as our motto, the noble words of Addison,

" 'Tis not in mortals to *command* success,
But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll *deserve* it."¹

And now, my friends, before I offer for your consideration another

¹ A member of the society has already offered to be one of thirty to contribute \$1000 each, making a total of \$30,000, to furnish the society with a suitable building.—ED.

suggestion, to my mind of very weighty importance, permit me to deprecate the idea of assuming to myself any greater knowledge or wisdom than is possessed by those around me. I am very conscious that many, that most of my brethren of this society are far more competent than I, to afford you wise and wholesome counsel; but you will, I am sure, give me credit for being sincerely desirous of promoting the lasting usefulness and well-being of a society in which, from the first, I have taken so deep and lively an interest; nor do I think that its younger members will be unwilling to listen to such suggestions, as a life neither of short duration, nor limited or little experience and familiarity with such studies and pursuits, as form more especially the subjects of our labors and lucubrations, may in some degree qualify me to present to them. Perhaps, towards them, at least, I may, without immodesty or presumption, adopt the words of the great orator, "Rome's best mortal mind," from whom I have already made more than one quotation: "*Nihil necesse est mihi de me ipso dicere: quanquam est id quidam senile, atatique nostræ conceditur.*" We are living and acting a history, which it will be the task and duty—a most solemn and momentous one—of our successors to record truly and impartially: at present, passion and prejudice and party feeling, are all too strongly and keenly excited to render it possible for the most conscientious and upright man amongst us to give a strictly truthful and impartial account, even of those occurrences which are daily taking place within his own immediate sphere of observation. We have only to glance at and compare the accounts of such occurrences in the more respectable journals of opposite sides of politics, to be thoroughly convinced of the truth of this assertion. Fair and impartial history cannot be written till the eyes of the historian are cleared, by the lapse of time, and the subsidence of excitement, from all the obscuring films of prejudice and passion, by which the vision of the most conscientious and upright is almost as liable to be darkened and perverted for a time, as that of the avowed political partizan, visionary enthusiast or bigoted fanatic. It is not uncommon to hear among those who foolishly strive to depreciate the study of history and biography, such an inference as this, drawn from the diverse and contradictory colorings given by different narrators to events which happen in our own time and almost within our own personal cognizance: "If (they say) it is so difficult to ascertain the exact truth of such events as these, transpiring in our own immediate neighborhood and time, how can we place any confident reliance on the records of ancient history, on the works of those who lived so long ago as

Herodotus and Thucydides and Livy, or even of the comparatively modern authors of European history?" The objection appears, at first sight, very fair and specious, but *only at first sight*. A little reflection will show that it rests on no better or more solid foundation than many another smart saying and sneering criticism, that from time to time have been launched against all that is venerable and holy in knowledge and religion. For my own part I can sit down and peruse Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* with far more security and confidence than I feel while reading many a record of events that occurred in the last generation. More or less of the dross of the original jealousies and prejudices of country, sect or party, still adheres to, and alloys the pure metal of fact and truth, in these more recent narratives. But the long lapse of time and the persevering labors of a stern, searching and antagonistic criticism, have long since cleared away from those ancient records, all this obscurity and corrupting dross, while moreover our own eyes, undimmed by any shade of party or personal or national prejudice, are, in this case, qualified more readily and perfectly to discern the golden vein of truth.

"What bearing has all this" you may ask, "on the present duty of this our society?" I answer, a most important one. It is not, as I have said, in our power at present to write a correct and impartial history of the mighty and momentous struggle, through which our beloved country, and as represented by her, the high and holy cause of the progress, civilization and freedom of humanity at large, are now passing; but it is *in* our power to secure and provide for our successors the means necessary to the fair and full accomplishment of that most onerous and most responsible duty. I think it was first some remarks of Lord Macaulay, an observation of the sources from which he drew so large an amount of graphic and life-like pictures of English history; and secondly, some suggestions of my esteemed friend, the Librarian of Harvard University, that originally impressed upon my mind, the great importance of preserving for the after use of the historian, the various journals, pamphlets and periodicals, that emanate from the press, more especially in a period of great event, and consequently of great excitement like the present.

Publications, that may seem to us even of a very trivial or worthless kind, may prove of immense, almost incalculable value to him, who amid the calm of a more peaceful future, shall undertake this mighty task of giving a true and life-like picture of the stirring and startling events, in the midst of which we are moving, living, acting,

and of the more secret, as well as more powerful motive powers that have propelled and sustained the machinery of those events in its rapid and resistless action.

An apt illustration of this value to the historian, of documents that might to a superficial eye, appear utterly useless for historic purposes, and indeed in their nature, quite unsuited to the dignity of history, just occurs to me in connection with Macaulay's celebrated work; in the early part of which, when examining the condition of artisans and laborers in the reign of Charles II, he draws valuable information from so low and insignificant a source as a *ballad of the time*, preserved in the British Museum. You will not deem it irrelevant in me to quote his words: "The common people of that day were not in the habit of meeting for public discussion, or of haranguing, or of petitioning Parliament. No newspaper pleaded their cause. It was in rude rhyme that their love and hatred, their exultation and distress, found utterance. A great part of their history is to be learned only from their ballads. One of the most remarkable of the lays chanted about the streets of Norwich and Leeds in the time of Charles the II, may still be read in the original 'broad-side.' I will quote a few lines, premising that it is a master clothier, who is supposed to be speaking:

' We will make them work hard for sixpence a day,
Though a shilling they deserve, if they had their full pay
If at all they murmur, and say it is too small,
We bid them choose whether they'll work at all.
Then hey ! for the clothing trade ! It goes on brave,
We scorn for to toyl and moyl, nor yet to slave ;
Our *workmen* do work hard, but *we* live at ease,
We go when we will, and come when we please.' "

Now who, I ask you, even of the most intelligent and far-seeing persons that may have heard that rude doggerel sung in the streets of Leeds or Norwich *would* or *could* have anticipated that, two hundred years afterwards, one of the most accomplished of modern historians and scholars, would derive from it, strong corroborative evidence of the condition of the English artisan in their own time ? *Yet such has been the case !*

Is not this then a strong and striking warning to us, to preserve in the archives of our society, copies of the journals, periodicals, political pamphlets, yes, and even satirical squibs and caricatures, of this eventful time, as likely to be of equal or greater benefit to the future historian of the great American civil war ? I feel myself warranted in commending this suggestion to your thoughtful consi-

deration, believing, as I do, that every member, may, in this way, at very little cost or trouble to himself, confer a valuable service, not alone upon our institution now, but upon the cause of truth, and the interests of our posterity hereafter. And, as our librarian is already more than sufficiently tasked by the present labors of his office, I would add the further suggestion, that those, who may think this hint worthy of adoption, should so arrange their respective collections of such fugitive literature in volumes similar to those already on our shelves, that they will entail no further trouble on the librarian, than that of labeling and entering them on the catalogue.

There are not a few kindred topics on which I would willingly dwell, but I feel, gentlemen, that I have already trespassed on your kind patience too long. I feel very deeply impressed with the importance of the measures, which I have ventured to commend to your attention. I believe those measures would be fraught with great and enduring benefit to our society, and I also believe them to be not only *possible*, but *practicable*. If, however, your mature consideration and collective wisdom should be in an opposite conclusion, then I would only ask you to believe, that they have originated in the promptings of a heart sincerely and ardently desirous of seeing this society raised to that elevated rank and extended sphere of usefulness, the attainment of which would at once, in my opinion, be a most just reward of its own labors and pursuits, and a most solid and enduring benefit to the people of New England.

However this may be, I conclude, as I began, with an earnest prayer, that you all, and this, our society in particular, may, at its termination, have reason to acknowledge with gratitude to the Giver of all Good, that this *New Year* shall have proved a *Good Year*!

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